CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A process for the soaking of dried or dry salted animal skins salted skin of animals comprising soaking the skins in aqueous solution of an alkaline protease enzyme isolated from *Conidiobolus coronatus* at ambient temperature for 16 to 20 hrs.

2. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the skins are soaked in the presence of a preservative.

3. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the concentration of the enzyme for soaking is in the range of 0.125 to 0.5% of raw weight of the skins.

4. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the preservative comprises any conventional preservative used in the tanning industry.

5. The process as claimed in claim 4, wherein the concentration the preservative is present in an amount in the range of 0.005 to 0.0 1% of the raw weight of the skin.

6. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the *Conidiobolus coronatus* is *Conidiobolus coronatus* deposited with the American Type Cell Culture (ATCC) depository under Accession Number PTA-4132.

7. A method for dehairing of dried or dry salted animal skins using an alkaline protease isolated from *Conidiobolus coronatus*, comprising applying to the flesh side of a soaked skin a paste comprising sodium sulphide, protease enzyme, a wetting agent and a

suspension agent for a period of 12 to 20 hrs., or suspending the hides in a mixture comprising protease enzyme, sodium sulphide and water for 20 to 30 hrs. and removing the hair.

8. The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the concentration of sodium sulphide is in the range of 1.5 to 3.0%

9. The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the concentration of sodium sulphide is in the range of 0.5 to 2%.

10. The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the concentration of sodium sulphide is 0.5%.

11. The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the wetting agent comprises a non-ionic detergent or a conventional detergent used in the tanning industry.

12. The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the suspension agent is selected from the group consisting of kaolin, chalk paste, and bentonite.

13. The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the enzyme concentration is in the range of 1.5 to 3.0% (w/w tyrosine), wherein the sulphide concentration ranges from 1.5 to 3.0% , wherein the pH varies between 7 to 10, and wherein the treatment time varies from 18 to 30 hrs.

14. The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the *Conidiobolus coronatus* is *Conidiobolus coronatus* deposited with the American Type Cell Culture (ATCC) depository under Accession Number PTA-4132.

15. A method for the bating of dried/dry salted animal skins, comprising applying an alkaline protease enzyme isolated from *Conidiobolus coronatus* to the skins at a pH in the range of 8.5 to 9.5, wherein the enzyme concentration is in the range of 0.125 to 1.0% (w/w), and wherein the treatment time is in the range of 30 min. to 2 hrs.

16. The method as claimed in claim 15 wherein the *Conidiobolus coronatus* is *Conidiobolus coronatus* deposited with the American Type Cell Culture (ATCC) depository under Accession Number PTA-4132.